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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/039,238	12/31/2001	Mark J. Beitz	KCC 4809	7291
321	7590	06/03/2004		
SENNIGER POWERS LEAVITT AND ROEDEL ONE METROPOLITAN SQUARE 16TH FLOOR ST LOUIS, MO 63102			EXAMINER	TORRES VELAZQUEZ, NORCA LIZ
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1771	

DATE MAILED: 06/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/039,238	BEITZ ET AL. <i>eb</i>
	Examiner Norca L. Torres-Velazquez	Art Unit 1771

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM

THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2004.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 12-15 and 22-31 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 12-15 and 22-31 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 31802.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-11 and 16-21 have been cancelled. Claims 12-15, 22 and new claims 23-31 are pending.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, see pages 6-9 of amendment, filed February 25, 2004, with respect to claim 12 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over LASSEN et al. (US 6,160,197) of claims 12-15 and 22 has been withdrawn.
3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 12-15 and 22 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 12-15 and 22-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'CONNOR (WO 99/59907) in view of LAM et al. (WO 02/102665 A1).

O'CONNOR discloses a strip used for an absorbent product that is made continuous by splices with are stitched across butting ends (19, 20) of the strip. In this way the spliced portions (A) of the strip can be used in the products without compromising the absorbency at the splices. (Abstract, Figures 1, 2 and 3, and also refer to page 11, fourth paragraph) The

reference teaches that the strip is a nonwoven material or an air laid cellulosic material. (Page 4, first paragraph) The reference discloses the invention substantially as claimed.

However, it does not disclose the claimed splice structure in the article.

The secondary reference discloses the use of the instantly claimed splice structure in absorbent articles and the fact that splices may occur in finished articles, the reference also discloses that the splice structure provides with fluid movement into and longitudinally along the material from one strip portion to the next during end use of the strip in a finished absorbent product; see page 16, line 9 through page 17, line 26.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the splice structure of the secondary reference in that article of the primary reference to provide an acceptable splice in a finished product that in this case will be an alternative splice structure that does not require stitching.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Norca L. Torres-Velazquez whose telephone number is 571-272-1484. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00-4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on 571-272-1478. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

NLTV
Norca L. Torres-Velazquez
Examiner
Art Unit 1771

May 27, 2004

Elizabeth M Cole
ELIZABETH M. COLE
PRIMARY EXAMINER